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STATE FOR IIP/IR HMURTEN, EUR/PPD MOKEEFE, GCOUCH, BARMSTRONG;
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [KIRC](#) [GR](#)

SUBJECT: FY 2008 Request for Sustaining Funds-American Corners
Greece

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11. Summary: Embassy Athens requests \$40,000 in FY08 sustaining funds to strengthen programs at four of the six American Corners (ACs) in Greece: Xanthi (north-eastern Greece), Veria (north-western Greece), Sparta (southern Greece), and the Hellenic American Union (HAU) in central Athens. Requested funds will be used for training AC Directors, a digital story telling workshop at Veria, speaker programming, and book orders. These ACs and their programming specifically fit into Post's PD program through outreach to diverse, critical audiences, including youth and Muslims, and by ensuring that popular English Language teaching materials are widely available in the major regions of Greece. End Summary.

12. Background: In late 2003, Post established the first AC in Veria at the city's very active central library. In 2004, ACs were established in Nea Philadelphia, Xanthi and Sparta. In 2005, ACs opened at HAU and in Corfu. The Department of Libraries and Archives at the Greek Ministry of Education (MOE) contributed to the selection of host institutions by providing a detailed profile of the candidates. Post agreed to establish a network of six libraries that served diverse audiences including youth and Muslim audiences throughout Greece. The northern city of Xanthi, for example, is a University town and has a population of 60,000 people, nearly half of which are Muslims. After only modest AC programming results in 2006, Post redoubled its efforts to encourage the ACs to become more active and significant progress has been made in establishing regular reporting mechanisms, developing a listserv among the AC directors to share ideas, and providing systematic support from the Embassy. The Greek MOE continues to be very supportive though is unable to contribute funding.

13. The American Corners in Nea Philadelphia and Corfu are currently facing administrative and functional problems, including shortage of staff, which continue to impede their programming capacity. This year and per recommendation in reftel, para 4, Post will determine whether these two ACs are able to meet program goals. Post is prepared to make the difficult choices regarding our ACs and how much they contribute to USG goals in Greece. End Background.

14. Post's detailed responses to reftel follow for each of the four ACs proposed for FY08 sustaining funds. Questions regarding FY07 funding, amount of GOE funding, and private donations are not applicable in any case. An integrated strategy for improvement is included in para 5.

-- Hellenic American Union (HAU) American Corner

a. Number of visitors: 3,273

b. Number of programs held (2007): 8

c. List of programs and total attendance: Lecture on "The Literary Careers of Mark Twain and Jack London," (January 2007), attendance:

200; Lecture on "Hemingway: His Life and Work," (January 2007), attendance: 22; Book exhibit on "American Philhellenism," (March 2007), attendance:102; Educational program on "Independence Day," (July 2007), attendance:41; Lecture on American films on young immigrants, (October 2007),attendance: 100; Lecture on "Library Trends in the United States," (November 2007), attendance: 25; "Lecture on Jack London Adventurous Life," (February 2007), attendance: 18; and one presentation to students of primary education on "How We Celebrate Christmas in the U.S.," attendance: 150.

- d. Most popular programs (by category): American literature, merican history and culture.
- e. Most popular materials (by category): IRC newsletters, electronic journals and documents on US history, literature, and the environment.
- f. Audience reached: High school and University students. Approximately 350 books have been checked out.
- g. Number of Embassy oversight visits: Three including the CAO, IRO and Athens IRC staff.
- h. Extent of media coverage of AC events: Strong coverage of all programs at HAU website and Mosaiko.gr, the U.S. Embassy's cultural website for youth audiences. Mosaiko covered extensively programs of all 6 American Corners in Greece.
- i. Training provided (2007): N/A

-- Sparta American Corner

- a. Number of visitors: 500
- b. Number of programs held: 7
- c. List of programs held: Ambassador Ries program with young students (March 2006), attendance 50; 2007 Earth Day series of events (paper show, book exhibit- March/April), attendance: 200; Paper show to commemorate the Marshall Plan (June 2006), attendance 50; Break-dance/Hip-hop group "HaviKoro" performance and workshops (October 2007), attendance 1150; Fulbright advisor promotes studies in the U.S. (November 2007), attendance: 60; two educational programs with elementary and secondary education teachers of English language to get acquainted with IRC produced material of English language teaching (December 2007), attendance:120; and one presentation to students of primary education on "How We Celebrate

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Christmas in the U.S.," attendance: 50.

- d. Most popular programs (By category): Havi Koro performance, Earth Day program, and educational programs on English language teaching.
- e. Most popular materials (By category): U.S. Education materials (TOEFL, GRE, Guide to U.S. Universities, etc.); U.S. Literature; English Language teaching. Approximately 360 books have been checked out.
- f. Audience reached: University students, professors, elementary and high school students.
- g. Number of Embassy oversight visits: 5 visits by PAO, CAO, AIO, and ELOs (twice in 2007).
- h. Extent of media coverage of AC: Local media (2 newspapers and one television station covered Havi Koro performance and visit of Ambassador. Also, wide coverage by Mosaiko.gr.
- i. Training provided (2007): N/A

-- Xanthi American Corner:

- a. Number of visitors: 1,100
- b. Number of programs held: 3
- c. List of programs held: Oscar Night in Xanthi, film showing and discussion (February 2007), attendance: 40; Showing of "Animated Award-Winning Children's Books" video package (March 2007), attendance: 60; 2007 Earth Day series of events (paper show, book exhibit- March/April), attendance: 150; Paper show to commemorate the Marshall Plan (June 2006), attendance 60
- d. Most popular programs: Oscar Night, and the Animated Award-Winning Children's Books video showing.
- e. Most popular materials: Printed copies of electronic journals on American teenagers and the English language. About 300 books have been checked out.
- f. Audience reached: General public, high school and university students.
- g. Number of Embassy oversight visits: Two including staff from U.S. Consulate in Thessaloniki.

h. Extent of media coverage: The Oscar Night event received coverage in local media, print and electronic. Also, coverage by Mosaiko.gr.

i. Training provided (2007): N/A

-- Veria American Corner:

a. Number of visitors: 3,500

b. Number of programs held: 4

c. List of programs held: Lecture of former ALA Director Office of Diversity on "Current Library Science Trends in the U.S." (May 2007), attendance: 60; Performance of local Jazz group (June 2007), attendance: 50; Showings of "Animated Award-Winning Children's Books" video package (April 2007), attendance: 150; 2007 Earth Day series of events (paper show, book exhibit- March/April), attendance: 250

d. Most popular programs (by category): Earth Day events

e. Most popular materials (by category): Reference collection, IRC thematic newsletters. About 400 books have been checked out.

f. Audience reached: General public, teachers and elementary and high school students.

g. Number of Embassy oversight visits: Three including staff from U.S. Consulate in Thessaloniki.

h. Extent of media coverage: Mosaiko.gr highlighted all 4 programs.

i. Training provided (2007): N/A

15. Plan for the future, Strategy for improvement.

-- The HAU AC was particularly notable last year for the quality, quantity and variety of programs undertaken, ranging from events profiling American authors, commemorating American friends of Greece, and trivia contests focusing on American themes. This AC has connected with energized, youth audiences. The Sparta AC also had a spectacular success with the Havi Koro breakdance event, attracting over 1150 young people for the performance and a workshop the next day. Post intends to support similar efforts and to use the experiences at these ACs to model programs at other ACs.

-- A key component for 2008 programming will be the reinforcement of English Language (EL) Teaching activities. Facilitated by advisors from the Greek Ministry of Education and Fulbright, IRC specialists will continue to organize meetings with English language teachers of primary and secondary education to promote the wealth of EL materials available that offer "American content." Post also plans to integrate AC programs into its Embassy Speakers Bureau to encourage Mission personnel to speak while visiting cities hosting American Corners.

-- Of special note is a three-day workshop planned for September 2008 by the American Corner in Veria on advanced storytelling techniques. The AC director has contacted the Center for Digital Storytelling in California to arrange a workshop focusing on the use of digital media to craft, record, and share, the stories of individuals and the community. The workshop will be part of the

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European Commission funded project "UNTOLD: Learning with Digital Stories." The audience will consist mainly of library staff and educators.

-- Post also hopes to sponsor a countrywide training program for the six AC directors. Our goal is to share best practices and discuss efforts to further support and energize AC programming. This program will highlight successes, other new ideas, and encourage the AC directors to further develop a network among themselves.

16. Budget and request for FY08 Sustaining Funds.

1A. Periodicals for 4 Corners: \$800 each, total: \$3,200

1B. Books for 4 Corners: \$5000 each, total: \$20,000

1C. Digital Story Telling Workshop in Veria: \$5,800

1D. Training/travel of Corner Directors: \$2,000

1E. Speaker programming: \$8,000

1F. Operating Expenses (photocopying, mailing, etc.): \$1,000

1G. Combined Request for 4 Corners: \$40,000

-- In 2007, Post allocated \$10,642.43 to support the AC program in

Greece. We anticipate a similar budget for 2008, split between materials (books, CDs, paper shows) and special events.

17. Compliance issues

-- All four American Corners were established with MOUs signed by the Embassy and the host institution, and all are posted on the AC Central database.

-- The records are complete and up-to-date.

-- Each AC is in compliance with core characteristics. Details available on request.

-- Post's IRO has reviewed this plan and concurs.

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